



Visionary leadership and leaders' burnout: a weekly diary analysis

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Abstract

Much has been written about the benefits of visionary leadership behaviors to the followers as well as leaders themselves. Given this prevalence, however, visionary leadership may carry some unnoticed harms. Based on the conservation of resources theory, we argue that visionary leadership behaviors can exhaust a leader's own resources and result in burnout. To test this hypothesis, we adopted weekly diary analysis and conducted two experience sampling studies through weekly surveys with each study lasts for five consecutive weeks. The results show that visionary leadership behavior is associated with psychological stress, and a resulting increase in burnout, among leaders. These detrimental outcomes extend beyond the advantages to followers (Study 1) and the leaders themselves (Study 2). The extent to which visionary leadership behavior is associated with increased psychological stress also depends on the characteristics of the followers. Specifically, when followers have low degrees of proactive personality (Study 1) or competence (Study 2), visionary leadership has stronger effects on psychological distress. Overall, the results elucidate when and why visionary leaders are likely to experience burnout.

Keywords Visionary Leadership · Distress · Burnout · Competence · Proactive personality · Positive affect

Introduction

In recent years, visionary leadership has attracted more and more attention of contemporary management and leadership scholars. Organizations are facing unprecedented challenges due to the rapid development of new technology and increasingly more complicated global economy. Thus, organizations need visionary leaders who

Extended author information available on the last page of the article

are able to project an image of the future and motivate followers to work together to make the change happen (Elkington et al., 2017; Smith, 2003).

Jack Ma is a modern example of visionary leadership, having changed how the world works in the digital age in the Chinese context (Svensson, 2021) and led Alibaba into the world's leading e-commerce giant. As reflected in the history of developing Alibaba since its initial launch on the Web, some scholars also think that Jack Ma occupies a position somewhere between transformational leadership and visionary leadership (Svensson, 2021). Transformational leadership and visionary leadership share some similarities that both leadership styles have the defining trait that vision is the major driver of change. However, visionary leaders are often brought in during a specific period of time in an organization, whereas transformational leaders are typically welcomed into an organization to increase employee engagement and nurture new leaders (Khan & Khan, 2021a, b).

In fact, a conceptual analysis of visionary leadership (D'Intino et al., 2008) has showed that visionary leadership can be a more significant predictor of change and innovation compared with other leadership styles (van Knippenberg & Stam, 2014). Several studies have discussed leadership in the context of employee behavior outcomes (Avolio et al., 2009; Zhou et al., 2018a, b). Visionary leaders bring opportunities to improve an organization's ability to meet the needs of its constituents by eliminating inappropriate patterns of behavior and replacing them with new behavioral patterns (Ribeiro et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2014). In addition, visionary leaders are held to be capable of treating increasingly serious ailments, dealing with dysfunctional leader characteristics, and gaining the trust of their followers. Given these benefits of visionary leadership, there is a consensus view that visionary leaders typically enact positive management practices.

Several scholars have examined how different leadership behaviors described in the leadership literature affect leaders themselves (e.g., Qin et al., 2018). However, it remains unclear whether visionary leadership behavior has an impact on leaders themselves. The paucity of research on the effects of visionary leadership on leaders contrasts with the existence of such research in the context of transformational leadership, which is a closely related but clearly distinct concept. Thus, the present study examines the impact of visionary leadership on leaders themselves in the Chinese context, using two empirical survey-based studies that include mediating and moderating variables.

This study uses conservation of resources (COR) theory as the main framework to explain how visionary leadership can stimulate resource utilization and positive outcomes for followers while simultaneously causing resource depletion and adverse outcomes for leaders themselves. Studies of leader–member exchange have noted that leaders have limited time, energy, and power, and the occupation of these limited resources incurs a cost (Elbaz & Haddoud, 2017; Hristov & Ramkissoon, 2016). Not surprisingly, to ensure the changes to take place, visionary leaders may need to invest considerable time and effort in developing efficient methods to motivate followers to look beyond their own interests and work collectively to achieve the common goals (Mousa, 2018). Thus, visionary leaders may find their leadership duties particularly demanding. As they drain their resources (e.g., time, energy) for inspiring followers

to achieve the vision together, they may undergo stress and exhaustion (Mousa & Ayoubi, 2019).

This study examines the psychological distress of leaders as a direct result of visionary leadership. As noted by Garcia et al. (2017), COR theory posits that psychological stress can be a reflection of resource loss. Leadership burnout is predicted by COR theory to be a downstream effect of resource depletion (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007).

In Study 1, we analyzed the psychological distress and burnout of visionary leaders. Besides, we also analyzed follows' assessment of leaders' visionary behavior as well as followers' psychological distress and positive affect. In Study 2, we expanded our investigation by examining the consequences and benefits of visionary leadership. Based on Arnold et al. (2015) and Lanaj et al. (2014), the benefits that visionary leaders themselves can derive from resource sourcing (need satisfaction, work engagement, negative affect, and positive affect) are investigated.

Furthermore, this study identifies a significant threshold condition for the proactive personality and competence of employees and provides evidence of how visionary leadership drains resources and harms leaders especially when followers are either not proactive or incompetent. Studies of visionary leadership have only documented organizational and contextual factors that reinforce the positive effects of visionary leadership on positive perspectives (Lan et al., 2022; van Knippenberg & Stam, 2014). However, leaders can suffer when their followers fail to appreciate leaders' ability and unable to perform their duties well. After all, visionary leaders are ultimately accountable to the organization for their followers' performance. However, organizations often encounter employees with low proactivity or low competence. Therefore, it can be predicted that a visionary leader working with less proactive or less competent followers is not likely to see satisfactory outcomes regardless of the leader's investment, which will eventually have a significant negative impact on the leader and exhaust the leader's psychological resources.

This study contributes to the visionary leadership literature in several ways. We emphasize the impact of visionary leadership on leaders themselves rather than on their followers. Contemporary leadership researchers have begun to understand the behavior of visionary leaders from an actor-centered perspective (Cameron, 2011). However, the resource-related costs of visionary leadership behavior have been ignored. This study challenges the widespread assumption in the leadership literature that visionary leadership behavior results in effective management practices, by highlighting the limitations of visionary leadership from a COR theory perspective (Cameron, 2011).

This study also integrates the contingent effect of follower personality into the interpersonal relationships of visionary leaders, whereas most previous studies have focused solely on the leader's personality (Lanaj et al., 2016). By extending the theory to include the consequences of interpersonal interactions, this study shows that visionary leadership does not take place in a vacuum but is greatly influenced by the personality traits of followers. Finally, this study's approach to leadership differs from that of most previous research on leadership (Bono & Judge, 2004; Maak & Pless, 2006). The interpersonal approach allows us to define the nature of visionary leadership depletion in the context of COR theory, where resource depletion occurs

on an individual basis. Overall, the model described in this study clarifies when and how the dark sides of visionary leadership behavior can manifest.

Theoretical foundation

The central tenet of COR theory is that individuals consistently strive to preserve their existing resources and create new resources (Halbesleben et al., 2014). The framework of COR theory (Halbesleben et al., 2014; (Hobfoll, 1989b) is used in this study because it is particularly pertinent and helpful for understanding the close-proximity actor-centric effects of everyday behavior (Bono et al., 2013). In other words, workplace behaviors and actions, such as visionary behavior, can have an impact on personal resources. Drawing on COR theory, we propose a mechanism via which displaying visionary leadership behavior indirectly influences leader burnout. Sonnentag et al. (2010) proposed that visionary leader behaviors may help managers build and conserve resources to maintain a sufficient level of recovery, an indicator of how quickly people return to their pre-stressor level of functioning and lessen the adverse effects of short-term strain reactions, such as burnout. However, there is still a lack of research on the effects of visionary leadership on leaders themselves.

Past studies on resource conservation has suggested that people's processes of resource development and conservation are influenced by their personal and environmental circumstances (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Wang & Shi, 2022). The common denominator of visionary leadership and transformational leadership is that vision is the key driver of change. Nevertheless, visionary leadership is defined more narrowly as creating and communicating a vision, an image of a collective's future (Greer et al., 2012) which is not a unique dimension in the traditional measurement of transformational leadership (Avolio et al., 1999). Furthermore, the literature on transformational leadership has integrated multiple leadership components, such as attributions and evaluations, as well as behaviors, into a wider concept without clarifying the special attributes of these components theoretically or methodologically (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Goodwin et al., 2001; Khan & Khan, 2019). Scholars have concluded in favor of investigating visionary leadership by itself, rather than as part of a larger, multi-faceted concept that includes behaviors other than conveying a vision (Greer et al., 2012; Kearney et al., 2019).

Visionary leadership has three main components. First, a visionary leader must create a vision, which may be considered as a future vision of the work that employees will be able to perform or as a broad end-state that embodies values, expectations, and objectives (Carton et al., 2014). Second, before formulating the vision, it should be properly conveyed to the followers (Kirkpatrick, 2016). The vision should include information about desired outcomes as well as appropriate resources to assist followers in adapting their performance to these objectives. Third, visionary leaders must encourage others (i.e., followers) to participate in the achievement of future goals (Dvir et al., 2004). In sum, visionary leaders mobilize employees to work toward a common cause (Shipley & Michela, 2006) so that employees have a shared view of their role in achieving the vision and are inspired to pursue it (Khatri et al., 2001; Stam et al., 2014).

Hobfoll (1989) asserts that as long as individuals have sufficient resources to cope with stress, work toward their goals, and pursue professional and personal growth, they will flourish and have a high level of happiness (i.e., low psychological distress) (Akirmak & Ayla, 2019; (Zhou et al., 2018a, b). Visionary leaders can provide individuals with a sense of purpose, help satisfy their need for belonging, and strive to preserve the necessary resources. Visionary leaders can also supply employees with important resources by articulating a clear vision that reduces ambiguity related to job roles and situations (Maak & Pless, 2006). Consistent with COR theory, visionary leadership behaviors secure resources for supporting and encouraging employees to become a better self through positive and fair interactions (Luo et al., 2020), thereby leading to lower levels of exhaustion for followers (Akirmak & Ayla, 2019).

On the other hand, COR theory is well suited to explain, in detail, how visionary leadership can harm leaders themselves, even though it also benefits both followers and leaders. According to COR theory, the acquisition, protection, and conservation of resources are human priorities (Hobfoll, 1989; Zhang et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2021). Hobfoll (2001, p. 341) defined resources as “object, condition, personal characteristic, and energy resources” and listed out 74 resources including time, feeling of accomplishing goals, and co-worker supports. Therefore, the target concept, including the progress toward achieving the target, plays an important role in the implementation of resource conservation. Moreover, resources have specific values that allow individuals to obtain more ideal resources (e.g., spending time and energy to obtain resources). Investing in resources involves short- and long-term perspectives. Timely and effective resource investment decisions can enable people to benefit from resources over the long term ((Hobfoll, 1989a). Short-term resource use and long-term resource acquisition require certain conditions that can explain these resources in terms of cost–benefit relationships (Khan et al., 2020a, b; Ng & Feldman, 2012).

The primacy of resource loss is one of the basic assumptions of COR theory (Babalola et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020; Ye et al., 2021). This assumption holds that the loss of resources is psychologically more salient for an individual than is the acquisition of resources (Halbesleben et al., 2014). This detrimental psychological effect of loss pushes the individual to actively conserve their existing resources, for example to escape from ongoing predicaments (Halbesleben et al., 2014). When resource expenditure is high and cannot be replenished in time, stress is particularly likely. These principles of COR theory lay the foundation for understanding the various ways in which visionary leadership behavior can result in the depletion of leaders' resources: (a) they may experience an increase in psychological distress, (b) they may view burnout as a defensive measure that protects their remaining resources for future use, and (c) if visionary actions are aimed at subordinates, the leaders are likely to experience adverse consequences for themselves, as followers often do not have the ability to convert leaders' resource expenditures into benefits.

Hypothesis development

Visionary behavior requires leaders to invest resources wisely. There is a relationship between visionary leadership and psychological distress, as behaviors that constitute visionary leadership can drain leaders' resources. Van Knippenberg and Stam (2014)

defined the visionary behavior of leaders as enacting a collective picture of future to persuade others to make that future a reality. Thus, it can be expected that visionary leaders need to spend huge amount of time and energy resources on plan enactment and communication, personnel coordination, implementation progress management together with many other basic leaders' roles and responsibilities. Resource loss is the major prediction for stress outcomes (Hobfoll, 2001). The continuous resources deprivation affects visionary leaders themselves and causes them to experience psychological distress. One study found that resource consumption occurs more quickly than resource replenishment in the workplace (Freedy & Hobfoll, 1994), and another found that the impact of resource loss was greater than the impact of resource acquisition (Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993). Although visionary leaders can experience both resource gains and losses, this study focuses on the detrimental effects of visionary leadership behaviors and the salience of leaders' resource loss can triggering psychological stress.

Work-related stress can inhibit or frustrate leaders when trying to take the lead. Psychological distress acts as a drain on the leader's valuable resources, leading to frustration associated with resource waste and the leader's attempt to retain or recover those resources. However, people experiencing psychological distress tend to overestimate the value of coping strategies for avoidance and withdrawal (Leiter, 1993). Visionary leaders can proactively conserve resources by increasing satisfaction, performance, and support for their vision. However, this cannot happen without the help from followers. Ignoring the role of employees in leadership behavior may lead to further psychological stress for leaders (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Studies have found that psychological factors can affect burnout in hospitality and other industries (Akgunduz & Bardakoglu, 2017; Stamolampros et al., 2019; Zopiatis et al., 2014). As psychological distress increases continuously, visionary leaders will eventually suffer from burnout which is manifested in the form of low productivity, alienated work relationship and negative emotional consequences (Hobfoll, 2001). This whole process will deteriorate the depletion of psychological and energy resources which may trap the visionary leader in a bad circle from resource loss to leader burnout via psychological distress. Thus, we posit that psychological distress mediates the relationship between visionary leadership and leader burnout and propose the following:

Hypothesis 1 There is a positive, indirect relationship between visionary leadership behavior and leader burnout through leader psychological distress.

COR theory emphasizes the importance of resources and the reasons for potential resource losses. According to COR theory, successful resource acquisition can help counteract resource losses. Notably, individuals seek signals that their resource expenditure generates returns and meets their goals (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Feelings of accomplishing goals can generate important psychological resources to offset the resources loss. However, visionary leaders cannot achieve the goal by themselves. They will need full supports from their followers. In principle, followers' characteristics can indicate to a visionary leader whether the organizational goals are likely to be accomplished. This signaling perspective implies two dimensions: whether the employees are willing to implement the plan and whether they can deliver the results.

Meeting the requirements of both dimensions play an important role in leaders' confidence in goal achievement which can increase the resources for visionary leaders. However, when the benefits of resources cannot be realized, the loss of resources is particularly damaging and leads to greater psychological distress for visionary leaders.

In this study, we highlight followers' proactive personality and followers' competence as possible contingent factors which can either alleviate or intensify resource loss. A proactive personality is a unique personality trait defined as a tendency to take personal initiative to create a favorable environment (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Visionary leaders need employees to proactively strive to achieve the common goals. Gaining followers' supports can increase leaders' confidence of goal achievement which will contribute to psychological resources gaining and alleviate the leaders' psychological distress caused by resource loss. However, not all employees are proactive. If employees are not proactive, the likelihood of goal achievement will be dim. Passive and reactive employees are not likely to embrace the changes willingly. At the same time, they will not proactively interact and communicate with leaders about their ideas. Moreover, the proactive personality of followers can be influenced by many factors, the most common of which are exhaustion or psychological distress due to internal competition, lack of attention or dissatisfaction with the boss, lack of skills, limited information, and excessive stress (Malik & Venkatraman, 2017). Visionary leaders will bring changes to the company. However, this may not conform to benefits of all followers or bring stress to employees who want to main the status quo. The potential conflicts and dissatisfactions can contain the proactive personality and weaken collective efforts toward the common goal. This study assumes that the proactive personality of followers is an essential boundary condition for the interpersonal consequences of visionary leadership. It is further proposed that followers' proactive personality is the primary determinant of the extent to which followers capitalize on or squander executives' visionary efforts.

Competence is also personality trait that represents individual differences in ability, sensitivity, and achievement (Costa Jr, et al., 1991). Competence is not synonymous with ability and is linked to other capacities, such as intellect. In the context of personality, competence reflects the desire for personal initiative. People with higher levels of perceived competence can better understand the conditions for achieving success and positive self-concept. Consistent with this view, competence has been shown to predict the performance outcomes, such as adaptability and overall performance (Piedmont & Weinstein, 1994). We propose that individuals with specific competencies (beyond general competence traits) are more likely to adapt to company changes and exhibit better performance. Competent followers are strong assistance to the visionary leaders for the implementation of enacted plans. However, incompetent employees will cause visionary leaders to spend more time and efforts on coaching and guidance which will result in further depletion of personal resources and higher level of psychological distress. Thus, we posit that proactive personality and competence moderate the indirect effect of visionary leadership behavior on leader burnout through leader psychological distress and propose the following:

Hypothesis 2 Follower proactive personality alleviates the indirect effect of visionary leadership behavior on leader burnout via leader psychological distress; this relationship is weaker for followers with high proactive personality and stronger for those with low proactive personality.

Hypothesis 3 Follower competence alleviates the indirect effect of visionary leadership behavior on leader burnout via leader psychological distress; this relation is weaker for followers with high competence and stronger for those with low competence.

The main goal of this study is to examine how visionary leadership behavior can have impact on leaders themselves. We believe that it is crucial to examine whether the positive effects of a leader's visionary leadership behavior on leaders and their followers are accompanied by negative consequences for the individual. In Study 1, we examined the moderating effects of proactive employee personality, which is associated with visionary leadership, on leader burnout, leader's psychological distress, and employee well-being. In Study 2, we examined the connection between visionary leadership behavior and changes in psychological stress, work commitment, positive affect, need fulfillment, and burnout in executives. Study 1 involved collecting information on how well leaders and followers were matched, while Study 2 involved collecting data on how leaders and their multiple followers interacted. No serious issue of common method bias was observed because the data were collected from different sources and at different times in the two studies (Podsakoff et al., 2003). By clarifying the underlying autoregressive connection, we controlled the prior assessment of indirect effect and outcomes (Beal, 2015), which allowed us to interpret the relationship as a change (Scott & Barnes, 2011). In Study 2, we examined the leader's behavior and the followers' personalities in a given group to address the problems faced by the leader's followers with different degrees of certain personality traits (i.e., proactive personality, competence). We considered how a follower or group of followers responded to the behavior of their visionary leader. In both studies, we relied on followers' accounts of their visionary leaders to avoid leaders' behavior following visionary principles and to prevent over-reporting.

STUDY 1

Methods

Data collection

In the first study, we collected weekly data from 608 supervisor–employee dyads in the hospitality industry (i.e., hotels). In terms of manager demographics, 65% were male, the mean age was 35.19 (SD=8.48), and the mean length of manager experience in the current organization was 5.34 (SD=2.92) years. The managers held

positions of various ranks, e.g., front office manager, finance manager, food and beverage manager, events and catering manager, hotel housekeeping manager, and sales and marketing manager. In terms of follower demographics, 62.8% were male, the mean age was 30.92 ($SD=5.52$), and the mean length of experience in the current organization was 4.25 ($SD=2.62$) years. The followers held various positions including receptionist, cashier, hotel housekeeper, chambermaid, and concierge. The survey participants were full-time employees of different hotels (from 3 to 5 stars), and their answers were collected during regular working hours through structured questionnaires. The questionnaire was originally designed in English and subsequently translated into Chinese through the translation–backtranslation method proposed by Brislin (1980).

One of the study authors, together with student volunteers, collected data from the respondents. The employees were then asked to encourage their immediate supervisors to take part in this survey. The data were collected through online and offline surveys. A week prior to beginning the experience sampling phase, we shared the baseline survey with the respondents (i.e., supervisors and subordinates) and included demographic items in both surveys. A measure of proactive personality was included in the survey of followers. In the sampling phase, the respondents (supervisors and subordinates) provided their answers for five consecutive weeks at the end of each week. We chose weekly (instead of daily) intervals to reflect the potential diversity in bosses' visionary behaviors and to ensure that the subordinates were likely to have interacted with their bosses.

Scholars have found significant interpersonal variability in leaders' behavior (36–46%) (Breevaart et al., 2014). Our weekly survey of supervisors consisted of an assessment of their psychological distress and burnout, while the weekly survey of subordinates comprised an assessment of their leaders' visionary behavior, and the followers' own psychological distress and positive affect. Among the 286 leader–follower dyads who agreed to participate, 608 matched weekly surveys were received from 152 leader–follower dyads (a response rate of 53%). Regarding the sampling procedure, we followed the recommendations of Marcus et al. (2017) in identifying suspicious data and no suspicious data were found.

Measurement scales

We employed a 5-point Likert-type scale (range: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to assess the responses to the construct items. We assessed level-1 constructs with the smallest number of construct items possible while maintaining the scale's psychometric properties in accordance with Beal's (2015) recommendations.

Visionary leadership behavior

We measured visionary leadership behavior (average α over five weeks = 0.95) using a method developed by Greer et al. (2012). All items of this scale were originally based on the visionary behavior sub-components of the charismatic leadership scale (De Hoogh et al., 2005; De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2009). Each leader's visionary

behavior over the past week was rated by their subordinates. A sample item is “Last week my leader had a vision and image of the future.”

Leader burnout

To measure burnout, we followed Arnold et al. (2015) and used a seven-item scale (average α across five weeks=0.90), i.e., the Copenhagen burnout inventory for measuring work-related burnout, developed and validated by Kristensen et al. (2005). A sample item is “Last week my work frustrated me.”

Psychological distress

We used a six-item measure, a shortened version of the psychological distress scale (average α across five weeks=0.88) developed by Warr (1990), which has been used and validated (Axtell et al., 2002; Zhang & Seo, 2018). The responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from “never” to “all the time.” A sample item is “Last week I felt uneasy.”

Follower positive affect

We used the five-item measurement scale of MacKinnon et al. (1999) to measure positive affect. On this scale, the subordinates evaluated their positive affect during the week (average α across five weeks=0.94). One item (“Last week I felt alert during my work”) was excluded from further analysis due to reliability issues. Sample items are “Last week I felt enthusiastic during my work” and “Last week I felt excited during my work.”

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)

We used the 12-item measurement scale of Dalal et al. (2009) to measure the OCB of followers (average α across five weeks=0.95). The subordinates evaluated their participation in OCB in the previous week. A sample item is “Last week I tried to help my supervisor.”

Follower proactive personality

We used the six-item (average α across five weeks=0.94) proactive personality scale used by Bateman and Crant (1993) and Claes et al. (2005) to measure follower proactive personality. A sample item is “If I see something I do not like, I fix it.”

Data analysis

We used MPlus 7.11 to test our proposed multi-level path analysis (Muthén & Muthén, 2012).

Between- and within-person construct

Based on the assumed path of a random slope (Beal, 2015), proactive personality was considered as a level-2 variable, and visionary leadership behavior, psychological distress, and burnout were considered as level-1 within-person constructs (Beal, 2015). We controlled for previously identified beneficial outcomes (i.e., positive affect, psychological distress, and OCB) of visionary leader behaviors toward employees to test whether the interpersonal disadvantages of the leader's assumed behavior were related to these advantages. These benefits are presented as alternative avenues for visionary leadership and their impact on leader burnout. We also used the prior level of leader's psychological distress and leader's burnout as control variables.

We followed common practice and used a fixed slope to model these level-1 control variables to minimize model complexity (Ilies et al., 2017). For the level-2 predictor, the grand-mean-centered method was used, while for the level-1 predictors, the group-mean-centered method was used, as suggested by Ohly et al. (2010). Authentic estimates were provided by group means centered on within-person association and eliminating between-person variance (Enders & Tofighi, 2007). Mediation and cross-level moderated mediation analyses were used to test the hypotheses. We used the approach of Preacher et al. (2010) to estimate the model in several stages and to evaluate the significance of indirect influences using a parameter-guided procedure. We calculated the magnitude of the indirect effects using the method of Bauer et al. (2006) and also performed a Monte Carlo simulation with 20,000 replicates to assess the confidence interval (CI) of each indirect association.

Results

Table 1 indicates the correlation between the focal variables and descriptive statistics. The null model divides the variance of our level-1 variable into two levels: within-person analysis and between-person analysis. The results indicate large differences between individuals (i.e., 42% for visionary leadership, 46% for psychological stress in leaders, 34% for burnout in leaders, 42% for positive affect of followers, 33% for OCB of followers, and 30% for psychological distress of followers), suggesting that the multilevel model was appropriate.

We performed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (between individuals and within individuals) to assess the applicability of the measurement model before testing the hypotheses. We included six variables in this model, encompassing visionary leadership behavior, leader psychological distress, leader burnout, follower positive affect, follower OCB, and follower psychological distress, considering both the intra- and inter-person levels. We also included follower proactive personality at the between-person level. Given the large number of items, we constructed a model with 3–4 items per construct (Williams & O'Boyle Jr, 2008) using random assignment (Little et al., 2002).

The seven-factor model indicated a good fit to the data: $\chi^2(328)=667.68$; comparative fit index=0.92; root-mean-square error of approximation=0.050; and standardized root mean squared residual (between)=0.046. All of the item loadings were

Table 1 Descriptive statistics, internal consistency reliabilities, and correlation matrix for both studies

Level-1 Constructs ¹	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Level-1 Constructs												
1. Visionary Leadership	2.85	1.24	(0.95)									
2. Prior Psychological Distress	3.27	0.95	0.01	(0.86)								
3. Psychological Distress (PD)	3.32	1.01	0.46***	0.10*	(0.88)							
4. Prior Leader Burnout	3.12	1.15	-0.10*	-0.02	0.18**	(0.86)						
5. Leader Burnout	3.32	1.08	0.11*	0.03	0.33***	0.17**	(0.90)					
6. Follower Positive Affect	3.27	1.39	-0.02	-0.03	-0.15***	-0.01	0.13*	(0.94)				
7. Follower PD	3.07	1.27	0.07	0.49***	0.12*	-0.04	-0.03	-0.03	(0.80)			
8. Follower OCB	3.24	0.85	0.41***	-0.13**	0.21**	-0.02	-0.13*	0.17*	-0.08	(0.95)		
Level-2 Constructs												
9. Follower Proactive Personality	2.40	1.29	-0.31***	-0.27***	-0.30***	0.05	-0.12*	-0.15*	0.11*	-0.18*	(0.94)	
Study 2												
1. Visionary Leadership	2.82	0.94	(0.91)									
2. Prior Psychological Distress	2.93	1.09	0.06	(0.93)								
3. Psychological Distress (PD)	3.22	0.93	0.34***	0.25**	(0.92)							
4. Prior Leader Burnout	2.92	1.10	0.06	0.13*	0.05	(0.87)						
5. Leader Burnout	3.51	1.08	-0.05	0.12*	0.45***	-0.01	(0.89)					
6. Leader Positive Affect	3.25	1.04	0.06	-0.11	0.02	-0.11	0.12*	(0.93)				
7. Leader Work Engagement	2.58	1.06	0.33***	0.06	0.05	-0.04	0.03	0.17*	(0.90)			
8. Leader Need Fulfillment	2.86	0.98	0.22**	0.03	0.11	0.10	-0.01	0.12*	0.08	(0.94)		
Level-2 Constructs												
9. Follower Proactive Personality	2.30	1.29	-0.39***	-0.21**	-0.48***	-0.14*	-0.19*	-0.18*	-0.08	-0.01	(0.95)	
10. Follower Competence	2.77	1.60	-0.42***	-0.02	-0.30***	0.02	-0.17*	-0.14*	-0.17*	-0.16*	0.18*	(0.94)

Note: (1) N=608 for Study-1 Level 1, N=152 Level 2 (listwise); N=272 for Study-2 Level 1, N=68 (listwise) Level 2; (2) Values of alpha are shown in parentheses; (3) Correlations for the level-1 variables represent group-mean centered relationships among the weekly variables at the within-person level of analysis. Level-1 variables were aggregated to provide estimates of between-person relationships with the level-2 variable²; (3) *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

significant ($p < .05$). The data showed that this model was more suitable than all 10 constrained models and more suitable than those constrained models that combined pairs of factors at the within-person level ($257.44 \leq \Delta\chi^2_s (\Delta d.f. = 5) \leq 903.21$). These results verified the discriminant validity of our focal construct measurement.

Hypotheses related to the within-person level

Table 2 shows the results related to Hypothesis 1, which predicts the positive and indirect effects of visionary leadership behavior on leader burnout through leader psychological stress. Our results showed that visionary leadership behavior was associated with increased managerial psychological distress in the past week ($\gamma = 0.39$, $p < .01$) and that managerial psychological distress was associated with increased managerial burnout in the past week ($\gamma = 0.33$, $p < .01$). The indirect impact of visionary leadership on leader burnout via leader psychological distress was significant and positive {indirect impact = 0.13, 95% CI = (0.107, 0.186)}, and thus Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Following previous research findings, our results indicated that visionary leadership behavior was positively associated with OCB ($\gamma = 0.42$, $p < .01$). However, contrary to expectations, visionary leadership behavior was not associated with follower psychological distress or follower positive affect ($\gamma = 0.04$, ns; $\gamma = -0.03$, ns). Finally, we used psychological distress and alternative mechanisms to study the overall indirect effects of visionary leadership behavior on leader burnout. The total indirect effect was non-significant {-0.04, 95% CI = (0.125, -0.023)}, indicating that the resource depletion expressed by psychological distress could counteract but not conceal the resource gains caused by follower OCB.

Hypotheses related to the between-person level

Study 1 examined the cross-level moderating impact of a proactive personality (as a broad personality trait) on the association between visionary leadership and leader burnout from leader mental stress to account for indirect effects at the individual level. Table 3 shows the cross-level moderating effect of the follower proactive personality ($\gamma = -0.14$, $p < .05$). The association between visionary leadership and leadership psychological distress was stronger when follower proactive personality was low ($b = 0.49$, $p < .01$) than when follower proactive personality was high ($b = 0.17$, $p < .05$).

An interaction diagram based on the results is shown in Fig. 1. When the followers' proactive personality was low, visionary leadership behavior had a significant internal and indirect effect on leader burnout (estimated value: 0.21; 95% CI = 0.144, 0.278), but when the followers' proactive personality was high, the effect was not significant (estimated value: -0.01; 95% CI = -0.057, 0.047). The variance between these indirect associations was found to be significant (estimated value: -0.22; 95% CI = -0.148 and -0.284), supporting Hypothesis 2.

Table 2 Multi-level path analysis for Study 1

Predictors	Dependent variables														
	PD			OCB			FPA			FPD			Burnout		
	B	S.E.	B/S.E.	B	S.E.	B/S.E.	B	S.E.	B/S.E.	B	S.E.	B/S.E.	B	S.E.	B/S.E.
Intercept	2.24	0.091	24.54**	1.87	0.117	15.88**	3.34	0.141	23.69**	3.11	0.086	36.09**	1.05	0.212	4.98**
Level-1 Variables															
Visionary Leadership	0.39	0.029	13.86**	0.42	0.038	11.19**	-0.03	0.045	-0.58	0.04	0.028	1.60	-0.01	0.032	-0.26
Prior Psychological Distress	0.20	0.031	6.58**												
Psychological Distress (PD)															
Follower OCB													0.33	0.041	8.05**
Follower Positive Affect													-0.07	0.031	-2.11*
Follower Psychological Distress													0.00	0.026	0.07
Prior Leaders burnout													0.25	0.040	6.25**
													0.01	0.035	0.36

Note: (1) Level 1 $N=608$; (2) results are before entering moderating effects; (3) * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

STUDY 2

Methods

Study 1 initially supported the idea that visionary leadership behaviors influence leaders themselves. The results also showed that there can be detrimental effects and consequences within the person (even when the positive effects on subordinates are taken into account), and the proactive personality of the subordinates also influences the intensity of these detrimental effects. In the second study, we broadened the scope of our investigation by examining the negative consequences of visionary leadership and its benefits. We also examined follower competence to complement our moderation findings.

Data collection

The data collection procedure used in Study 2 was similar to that used in Study 1. Employees of small and medium-sized tourism companies in the Chinese provinces of Anhui and Jiangsu took part in the survey. The respondents held a variety of positions, such as tour guides, booking clerks, event management assistants, receptionists, sommeliers, and accountants. These full-time employees recruited their immediate supervisors (e.g., marketing managers, travel and events managers, finance directors, agency managers, and personal relationship managers) who supervised multiple employees. This enabled us to overcome the limitations of Study 1, which included only one follower per leader. We shared the baseline survey using online survey tools to determine measures of demographics and personality (i.e., proactive personality and competence). Each week for five weeks, we exchanged questionnaires with supervisors and their immediate followers. The followers reported on their leader's visionary behavior, and the leaders reported on their psychological distress, burnout, positive affect, need for fulfillment, and commitment.

We collected data from 82 leaders and 242 followers from 382 weekly surveys of the 144 groups who agreed to participate in the study (each group completed an average of 4.6 responses, representing a 57% response rate). To identify suspicious data, we followed similar methods to those in Study 1 (Marcus et al., 2017). After removing suspicious data, the final sample of Study 2 included 68 supervisors and 204 subordinates who responded to 272 weekly matching surveys. The manager demographics were as follows: the mean tenure was 8.10 (SD=3.93) years, 66% were male, and the mean respondent age was 37.62 (SD=9.22). The employee demographics were as follows: the mean tenure in the current organization was 6.44 (SD=3.34) years, 62% were male, and the mean age was 32.74 (SD=6.45).

Table 3 Cross level interaction of Visionary leadership and Follower's Proactive Personality for Study 1

Predictors	Dependent variables					
	Psychological Distress			Burnout		
	B	S.E.	B/S.E.	B	S.E.	B/S.E.
Intercept	2.23	0.090	24.78**	1.08	0.214	5.05**
Level-1 Variables						
Visionary Leadership	0.35	0.030	11.67**	0.00	0.008	0.31
Prior Psychological Distress	0.18	0.025	7.04**			
Psychological Distress (PD)				0.10	0.045	2.11*
Follower OCB				-0.09	0.035	-2.64**
Follower Positive Affect				0.01	0.020	0.65
Follower Psychological Distress				0.10	0.021	4.76**
Prior Leaders burnout				0.02	0.043	0.38
Level-2 Variables						
Proactive Personality (PP)	-0.24	0.040	-5.85**	0.03	0.037	0.81
Cross level interaction						
Visionary Leadership x PP	-0.14	0.057	-2.44*			

Note: (1) Level 1 N=608, Level 2 N=152 (listwise); (2) results are after entering moderating effects; (3) * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

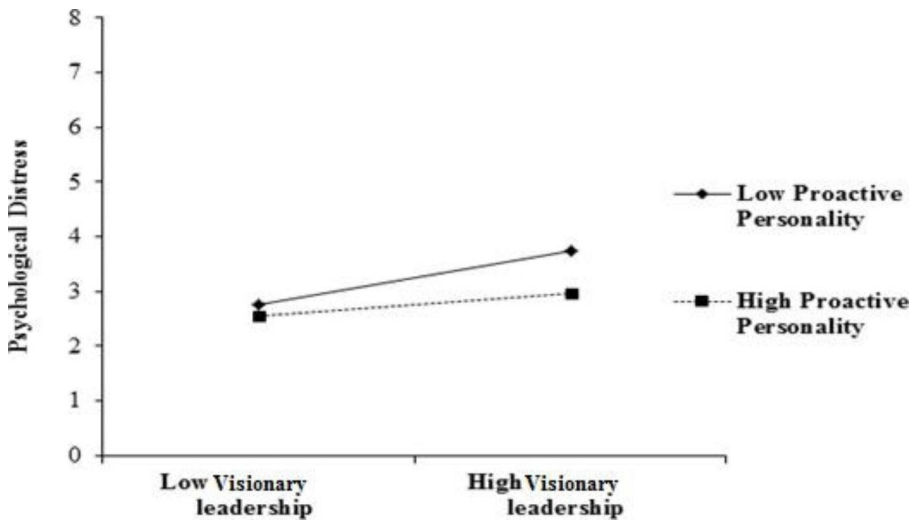


Fig. 1 Study 1 Cross-level moderating effect of follower proactive personality on the relationship between visionary leader and leader psychological distress

Measurement scales

Visionary leadership

To assess visionary leadership, we utilized the same items as in Study 1 (average α across five weeks=0.91).

Table 4 Multi-level path analysis for Study 2

Predictors	Dependent variables														
	PD			Need Fulfillment			Leader Positive Affect			Work Engagement			Burnout		
	B	S.E.	B/S.E.	B	S.E.	B/S.E.	B	S.E.	B/S.E.	B	S.E.	B/S.E.	B	S.E.	B/S.E.
Intercept	1.74	0.206	8.43**	2.22	0.84	12.05**	3.06	0.198	15.45**	1.53	0.191	8.01**	1.87	0.310	6.02**
Level-1 Variables															
Visionary Leadership	0.32	0.054	5.95**	0.23	0.062	3.64**	0.07	0.067	1.01	0.37	0.064	5.78**	-0.07	0.071	-1.01
Prior Psychological Distress	0.19	0.047	4.19**												
Psychological Distress (PD)															
Need Fulfillment															
Leader Positive Affect															
Work Engagement															
Prior Leaders burnout															

Note: (1) Level 1 N=272; (2) results are before entering moderating effects; (3) *p<.05, ** p<.01.

Leader burnout

To assess leader burnout, we utilized the same items as in Study 1 (average α across five weeks=0.89).

Leader psychological distress

To assess leader psychological distress, we utilized the same items as in Study 1 (average α across five weeks=0.92).

Leader positive affect

A short version of the PANAS (The Positive and Negative Affect Scale) with five items (average α across five weeks=0.93) developed by MacKinnon et al. (1999) was used to measure leader positive affect. Sample items are “Last week I felt excited during my work” and “Last week I felt inspired during my work.”

Work engagement

To assess the work engagement of leaders (average α across five weeks=0.90), we utilized three measures established by Rich et al. (2010). A sample item is “Last week I felt positive about my job.”

Leader need fulfillment

We used the nine-item scale reported by La Guardia et al. (2000) to assess the leaders' weekly need fulfillment (average α across five weeks=0.94). Sample items include “Last week I felt free to be who I was” and “Last week I felt like a competent person.”

Proactive personality

To assess followers' proactive personality (average α across five weeks=0.95), we utilized the same items as in Study 1.

Follower competence

We used the 10 items proposed by Gough (1996) from the International Personality Item Pool to measure followers' competence (average α across five weeks=0.94). Subordinates rated their response to each item statement. A sample item for this construct is “I come up with good solutions.”

Data Analysis

Similar to study 1, we used MPlus 7.11 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) in study 2 to test our hypothesis through multi-level path analysis. The proactive personality and competence of followers were modeled as level-2 interpersonal variables. Using a random slope Beal (2015), visionary leadership behavior, psychological discomfort, and burnout were modeled as level-1 intrapersonal variables. We used a fixed slope to model the control variables (interpersonal relationships of visionary leadership behavior and previous levels of psychological distress and burnout) (Koopman et al., 2016). The intrapersonal benefits of visionary leadership behavior were modeled as a substitutive mechanism for visionary leadership behavior and its subsequent impact on leader burnout. We used parameter-guided procedures to estimate the indirect effects, thereby testing the hypotheses through our mediation analysis and cross-level analysis of moderated mediation (Kenny et al., 2003). We performed a Monte Carlo simulation with 20,000 replicates to establish each indirect association's CI.

We also studied the moderating effects of proactive personality and competence to determine whether competence, as an aspect of proactive personality, shows validity, as suggested by Paunonen and Ashton (2001). Given that we collected scores on the visionary behavior of leaders from multiple followers every week, we calculated the intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs) to support the aggregation of these scores. The group (i.e., leader) level accounts for a considerable portion of the variance in such constructs. The average ICC (1) and ICC (2) values throughout the five weeks were 0.58 and 0.82, respectively, and the range of the F-test values was $F=2.78$, $p<.01$ to $F=5.70$, $p<.01$ for weekly visionary leadership behavior. These ICC (1) and ICC (2) values are much higher than the recommended value (Bliese, 2000), supporting the aggregation of visionary leadership behavior and influence at the level of the group (i.e., leader).

Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics and the correlation values between the variables presented in Study 2's research model. Consistent with Study 1, considering the level-1 variables, most of the variance of Study 2 was at the within-person level (i.e., 44% for visionary leadership behavior, 36% for leader psychological distress, 31% for leader burnout, 42% for leader engagement, 45% for leadership positive affect, and 33% for leadership needs fulfillment), indicating that multi-level modeling was appropriate. Before hypothesis testing, we conducted between-person and within-person CFA to measure the suitability of the measurement model. Key variables were included in the model at the within-individual and between-individual levels. We also considered followers' proactive personality and competence by catering to the between-person level. The proposed eight-factor model indicated a good fit to the data: $\chi^2(555)=977.91$; comparative fit index=0.93; root-mean-square error of approximation=0.053; and standardized root mean squared residual (between-person)=0.062. The model was a significantly better fit to the data than any of the constrained models were, and it was also a better fit than any pair of combined factors at the intrapersonal level from these constrained models ($58.22 \leq \Delta\chi^2$ (Δ d.f. =

5) ≤ 625.81), indicating the distinctness of the main constructs and the discriminant validity of our model.

Hypotheses related to the within-person level

The results of our analysis are shown in Table 4. These results supported Hypothesis 1 (and replicated the results of Study 1). Specifically, they showed that visionary leadership behavior was associated with an increase in leader psychological distress in the last week ($\gamma=0.32$, $p<.01$) and leader psychological distress was associated with an increase in leader burnout in the last week ($\gamma=0.62$, $p<.01$). Visionary leadership behavior had a significant positive effect on leader burnout through leaders' psychological distress {indirect impact=0.22, 95% CI = (0.135, 0.322)}. Similarly, visionary leadership behavior was positively associated with leaders' work engagement ($\gamma=0.37$, $p<.01$) and need fulfillment ($\gamma=0.23$, $p<.01$), and non-significantly related to leaders' positive affect ($\gamma=0.07$, $p>.05$). Complementing Study 1, the overall indirect effect of visionary leadership behavior on leader burnout was non-significant {total indirect effect=-0.09, 95% CI = (-0.238, 0.058)}.

Hypotheses related to the between-person level

The results of cross-level moderation analysis are shown in Table 5. Hypothesis 2 states that proactive personality moderates the indirect effects of visionary leadership on burnout. Table 5 shows that the cross-level interaction was not significant ($\gamma=0.03$, $p>.05$), and the indirect effects were also non-significant; thus, Hypoth-

Table 5 Cross level interaction of Visionary leadership, Follower's Personality, and Competence for Study 2

Predictors	Dependent variables					
	Psychological Distress			Burnout		
	B	S.E.	B/S.E.	B	S.E.	B/S.E.
Intercept	1.77	0.207	8.55**	1.91	0.312	6.12**
Level-1 Variables						
Visionary Leadership	0.35	0.030	11.67**	-0.08	0.072	-1.11
Prior Psychological Distress	0.15	0.069	2.17*			
Psychological Distress (PD)				0.64	0.064	9.87**
Need Fulfillment				-0.07	0.093	-0.73
Leader Positive Affect				0.07	0.051	1.37
Work Engagement				0.06	0.069	0.91
Prior Leaders burnout				0.02	0.020	0.87
Level -2 Variables						
Proactive Personality (PP)	-0.32	0.038	-8.42**	-0.14	0.051	-2.75**
Competence	-0.13	0.031	-4.19**	-0.10	0.041	-2.44**
Cross level interaction						
Visionary Leadership x PP	0.03	0.053	0.56			
Visionary Leadership x Competence	-0.32	0.051	-6.27**			

Note: (1) Level 1 $N=272$, Level 2 $N=68$ (listwise); (2) results are after entering moderating effects; (3) * $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$.

esis2 was rejected. Hypothesis3 postulates that the competence of followers moderates the indirect influence of visionary leadership behavior on manager burnout through managers' psychological stress. According to the results, the competence of followers had a cross-level moderating influence on the within-person association between visionary leadership behavior and psychological distress ($\gamma = -0.32$, $p < .01$); as shown in Fig. 2, for followers with low competence, this association was stronger ($b = 0.64$, $p < .01$) than for followers with high competence ($b = -0.04$, *n.s.*).

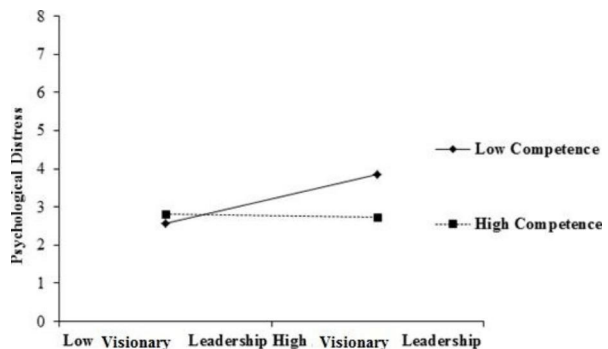
Therefore, the competence of followers attenuated the indirect impact of visionary leadership behavior on manager burnout through managers' psychological stress, confirming Hypothesis3.

Discussion

The results of our two studies emphasize the previously neglected harmful effects of leadership behavior: the dark side of visionary leadership. This deepens our understanding of the role of visionary leadership and their influence on leadership itself. Visionary leadership theories and researchers remain biased toward focusing on the benefits of visionary leadership for employees (Bono & Judge, 2004; Lanaj et al., 2016), and the effects of visionary leadership behavior on leaders themselves have rarely been studied.

This study investigated whether visionary leadership behavior is also influential for leaders, reflecting the importance of followers. We examined the imbalance caused by the visionary leadership behaviors can benefit followers while entail detrimental effects on leaders themselves, and explored the corresponding mechanism, to address the dark impact of visionary behavior on leader burnout in tourism and hospitality. In two studies, we found that visionary leadership behavior was associated with an increase in psychological stress, which in turn was associated with increased managerial burnout. These findings also reveal the conditions in which visionary leadership behavior is most likely to occur, informing research on the effects of visionary leadership behavior on the psychological stress of leaders. The study's findings indicate that employees with a low proactive personality (Study 1 and Study 2) and low competence (Study 2) are more likely to experience leader burnout due to psychological stress.

Fig. 2 Study 2 Cross-level moderating effect of follower competence on the relationship between visionary leader and leader psychological distress



Theoretical and practical implications

This study provides theoretical and practical implications for the management literature. First, this study contributes to the literature on visionary leadership through an actor-centered approach and emphasizes the consequences of visionary leadership behavior between individuals. This study challenges the consensus that visionary leadership is positive for employees and leaders (D’Intino et al., 2008) by examining leader behavior from a COR theory perspective. Research on leadership and resource conservation has only reported on conservation and organizational variables that can enhance the positive impact of visionary leadership (Baum et al., 1998; Elenkov & Manev, 2005; van Knippenberg & Stam, 2014). Although visionary leadership usually produces fruitful results for the organization, it also depletes the psychological resources needed for leaders to deal with followers with low proactive personality or competence.

Second, we contribute to our understanding of visionary leadership. Historically, scholars have primarily taken the perspective of interpersonal relationships and have suggested that some leaders engage in visionary behaviors while others do not (Luo et al., 2020). These assumptions preclude the possibility that leaders show visionary behavior more at certain times than other times (e.g., Breevaart et al., 2014). In our study we observed a large proportion of interpersonal differences (42–44%) in the behavior of executives, indicating the dynamic nature of this type of leadership behavior. That is, fluctuations can occur in interpersonal relationships and visionary leadership behavior is associated with psychological stress and burnout on the part of leaders. This study posits that these fluctuations are systemic rather than temporary failures in the assumption of interpersonal relationships. The unpredictability of visionary leadership also suggests that organizations can benefit from interventions that focus on supplementing interpersonal resources for leaders when they are running out of resources.

Although we failed to uncover the personality of followers as a constraint influencing the degree of “dark side” effects, we succeeded in elucidating the dark side of visionary leadership behavior (beyond the interests of followers and leaders). We found that the proactive personality of employees is a factor influencing leader behavior. Regardless of whether a visionary leader’s behavior is useful or wasteful, we believe that competence is a specific aspect of personality and the key to solving this problem. In Study 1, a proactive personality was found to have a moderating effect on the discovered relationship, while in Study 2, follower competence was found to be a significant moderator. In Study 1 we did not examine the moderating effect of competence and we were unable to conclude whether the use of a broad personality trait (proactive personality) or a narrower aspect of personality (competence) is the appropriate strategy. Our results at least show that the impacts of visionary leadership behavior do not arise without contexts but depend in part on the characteristics of the followers affected by these behaviors.

From a practical point of view, psychological distress can also lead to burnout and resignation, leading to obvious financial losses for an organization (Allen et al., 2010) and workplace chaos. It is recommended that leaders should always demonstrate leadership skills, and we recommend proceeding with caution. Similarly, lead-

ers should take appropriate action to reduce the dark aspects of visionary behavior with regard to leaders themselves. For example, leaders could take regular breaks to avoid psychological stress caused by work-related activities (Stamolampros et al., 2019). Likewise, leaders could attend social events to replenish and restore their resources ((Wang et al., 2014b). The type of interpersonal relationship that we studied also means that leaders should strategically shape visionary leadership behaviors to prevent resources loss for both themselves and their followers. For example, leaders should pay special attention to the recruitment, trainings, and incentive plans to ensure that employees are endowed with high performance and competence.

Limitations and future research directions

This study has several limitations. We could not establish causality from the results of Studies 1 and 2. Although we included a lagged relationship to examine changes in the endogenous variables (Beal, 2015), we also measured focal variables. Additionally, the data sources of our experience sampling research were notably disparate (i.e., leaders and followers). Exploration of the link between leader mental stress and leader burnout should be based on independent data sources. However, in both studies, we used the group mean in the experience sampling design, which mitigated various sources of variability in the common method and ensured that no serious common method bias was observed (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Second, Study 1 relied on follower-reported data on follower behavior and proactive personality, raising concerns about the representativeness of followers and visionary leaders. Conducting experience sampling of visionary leaders and all of their followers is not feasible. We may have chosen followers who had comfortable relationships with their bosses, leading to selection bias. Although this limitation was addressed by including multiple followers in Study 2, information about the early followers was known in advance. In future research, randomized groups of followers could be used to increase representativeness. In both of our studies, the followers' rating for visionary leadership method was below 3.0, indicating that the leaders featured in this study may be encountering relationship problems with their followers. Furthermore, in Study 1, we found that the followers' proactive personality had a significant moderating effect, which is an important finding of the study.

Third, this study paid special attention to the short-term immediate results of the visionary behavior of leaders, which ultimately impacts leaders themselves. From the COR perspective, short-term attention leads to sporadic resource losses (Halbesleben et al., 2014). The results of this study allow us to extend the results of previous studies to account for the intrapersonal differences in visionary leadership behavior (Lanaj et al., 2016), showing that leadership behavior is related to resource depletion. However, future researchers could also study the downsides of visionary leadership behavior from a long-term perspective. For example, visionary leaders may suffer less from mental stress and be better able to see the results of their work over the long term than over the short term. The fertile results of their visionary behavior, coupled with a cycle of psychological distress and burnout, may eventually trigger the effects of stress and leads to dissatisfaction with their current job (Lanaj et al., 2016). Future scholars could fruitfully examine whether leaders who leave an organization to pur-

sue opportunities (i.e., higher positions) still believe that they need to adopt more visionary behaviors. When leaders view visionary behavior as the price of personal growth, it may be logical to adopt such behavior. However, if these behaviors lead to managerial burnout, it can be considered illogical. Additionally, leaders who move to higher-performing organizations may receive the opportunity to channel their visionary behavior to more capable followers.

Fourth, this study explored visionary leadership behaviors rather than any other leadership behavior that might be detrimental to leaders themselves. It is unclear whether our paradigm applies to other explicit leadership behaviors (e.g., ethical, collaborative, charismatic, and authentic leadership) and shady leadership behaviors (e.g., toxic and abusive). Barnes et al. (2015); Khan et al. (2020a, b) point out that leaders might exhibit abusive behavior when resources are scarce, suggesting that resource depletion and psychological distress are the primary cause, not the consequence, of abusive behavior (Khan & Khan, 2021a, b).

Fifth, in both of our studies, follower personality traits moderated the effects of visionary leadership behavior on leader psychological distress. However, leader traits can also act as moderators. The emphasis on visionary leadership involves pursuing ideas and encouraging change (Kark & Van Dijk, 2007). Leaders of certain personality traits may suffer less adverse effect from exhibiting visionary leadership behaviors. Additionally, leaders with a more abstract level of interpretation are more likely to ignore the short-term harms of visionary leadership behavior and achieve potential long-term benefits (i.e., to achieve the leader's vision).

Sixth, past research has found various predictors of our studied variables. Exposure to workplace ostracism is related to work engagement (Kwan et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2020), psychological distress (Wu et al., 2012), and OCB (Wu et al., 2016). Perceived mentoring functions are related to OCB (Kwan et al., 2011). Perceived incivility (Chen et al., 2013) and servant leadership (Song et al., 2022) are related to work engagement. Exposure to servant leadership (Tang et al., 2016) and negative mentoring experience (Yi et al., 2017) are related to emotional exhaustion, a dimension of burnout. It is challenging to include every control variable that has been studied by researchers, and we recognize this limitation. Future research could consider these control variables in the same or a different research context to confirm our findings using a larger sample size.

Finally, we use COR theory to illustrate that followers who lack a proactive personality and competence can signal whether their leader's visionary behavior is being wasted or taken advantage of. However, we did not directly examine whether followers with low proactive personality or competence wasted their leaders' visionary behavior or whether leaders simply perceived that their efforts were likely to be wasted. Therefore, a direct study of these proposed mechanisms is important for future research on actual waste and perceptions of waste.

In conclusion, our study expands the scope of visionary leadership by showing that visionary leadership impacts leaders' psychological distress. Followers with a low degree of proactive personality or competence can maximize such harm. This study could serve as a springboard to inspire future studies on the detrimental effects that leaders can suffer through visionary leadership.

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